



American Youth are Struggling to Get the Work Experience They Need for Jobs of the Future

Youth employment is a critical element of success for young people. As a pathway to careers and education, meaningful summer employment not only helps young people develop workforce and leadership skills to get and keep good jobs, but also connects them to long term economic opportunity. Unfortunately, the recession has had a particularly hard impact on youth employment. Only 45 percent of youth between the ages of 16-24 were employed the end of August, including only 33.8 percent of African American youth. This is significantly lower than the 54.5 percent of youth who were employed five years ago and 56.1 percent of youth who were employed 10 years ago. Only 21 out of every 100 teens in low-income families had a job this past summer.

In 2009 and 2010, Recovery Act funding supported over 372,000 summer and year-round job opportunities for low-income youth. This past summer, the Department of Labor set a goal of obtaining 100,000 summer job commitments from the private sector – and nearly reached that goal with 84,000 jobs despite a lack of funding.

The Private Sector Can Help

Every US company can play a part in creating pathways to employment for low-income and disconnected youth. In January 2012, the President is challenging businesses to commit to connecting low-income youth to summer employment. Recognizing that in a difficult economy not every business is in a position to hire, the Administration's new *Summer Jobs+* program includes businesses that hire youth, as well as companies that provide additional pathways to help connect youth to a better future. Participating companies also see benefits for their businesses, such as increased employee engagement, customer loyalty, and employee retention.

Businesses can accept the President's challenge and make a specific pledge to help create pathways to employment for low-income youth in at least one of the following ways:

Life Skills: Provide youth with work-related soft skills, such as communication, time management, and teamwork, through coursework and/or experience. For example, your company could offer resume writing or interview workshops or provide employee mentors.

Work Skills: Provide youth with insight into the world of work to prepare for employment. For example, businesses can host job shadow days.

Learn and Earn: Provide youth with on-the-job skills in a learning environment while earning wages for their work. For example, businesses can offer paid internships, and/or offer permanent positions that provide on-the-job training. Business can also partner with schools and higher education institutions to give youth the opportunity both to strengthen their academic skills while working as well as to connect learning to the context of work.

Tools for Employer Success

To support companies that make pledges to *Summer Jobs+*, the Corporation for National and Community Service published a [Youth Employment Partnerships toolkit](#). The toolkit provides information on how businesses can create clear, community-supported, mutually beneficial experiences for young people. Complete with case studies of best practices, the toolkit guides businesses down the pathways that best match the company's assets and readiness to provide youth the skills they need for employment and adulthood.

All of the commitments made through the Summer Jobs+ initiative will be accessible to young people through the Summer Jobs+ Bank. This easy-to-use search tool launching in March will help connect low-income youth, community organizations, and committed employers.

- There is no need for employers to post jobs in multiple places.
- Any online job posting can be easily “tagged” and will be found through a customized Google search.
- The search tool will be available on federal websites, but can also be embedded into employer sites, personal blogs, or any other site.
- While the tagging process is simple, for those companies that want more help posting jobs, Internships.com, Aftercollege.com, and LinkedIn have all agreed to do so free of charge.

How Can You Get Involved?

1. Encourage your company, partners and community organizations to make a commitment at www.dol.gov/summerjobs.
2. Encourage young people to sign up to be the first to know when the Summer Jobs+ Bank goes live.
3. Encourage everyone to visit www.dol.gov/summerjobs and share a story about how they, someone they love, or someone they worked with was impacted by a summer job.
4. Make Summer Jobs+ part of your outreach plans through Memorial Day.